

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Timber Lake School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2005-2006**

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Dates of On Site Visit: January 27, 2006

Date of Report: February 6, 2006

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:
Comprehensive plan
Child find articles
Screening announcement
Referral/evaluation/placement data

File reviews
Enrollment data
Annual application for IDEA funds
General district information
Screening list
Part B Application for funds
Data table I, age and placement alternatives
Comprehensive plan
Parent rights brochure
Data by age and placement alternative
District dropout rate,
SAT 9 data
Staff interviews
Exit data table H
Content standards
Personnel data
Staff certification
Contract staff licenses
District supervision/evaluation policy
CSPD needs assessment data
Teacher surveys

Promising Practice

The steering committee concluded that 75% (3) of students with disabilities graduated with a regular high school diploma in 2003 compared to the state average of 43.30%. 25% (1) of students with disabilities received a certificate of completion in 2003 compared to the state average of .60%.

Meets Requirements

The steering committee concluded that the school district has an established an effective ongoing child find system to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities, ages birth through 21 years who may need special education and has an effective pre-referral and referral system in place to ensure students are identified without unnecessary delay. The district employs an adequate supply of personnel who are appropriately certified and supervised to work with children with disabilities, implements effective procedures to determine professional development needs and takes appropriate actions to meet these needs.

Needs Improvement

The steering committee concluded that referral documentation needs to be available in the files for all children initially referred for special education services. Nine out of ten files reviewed had a referral form for initial evaluation.

Validation Results

Promising Practices

The monitoring team was unable to validate the identified promising practices. Those activities identified are mandated by rule and regulation.

The monitoring team identified three promising practices in the area of general supervision specifically related to professional development. The school district sponsored a one day inservice for all teachers grades kindergarten through twelfth grade on implementing the Writing to Win curriculum. This was implemented to work on ensuring the writing curriculum is consistent throughout the district. The district

has implemented a peer mentoring program with three first year elementary teachers. Each of the beginning teachers is appointed a mentor from within the elementary staff. The peers meet to discuss concerns, offer support and work together to create a productive learning environment. In the middle school, each team is allotted a daily time to meet and discuss concerns. This time is devoted for sharing strategies, discussing students having difficulty and planning curriculum.

The school has also implemented several strategies to address continued student progress in curricular areas. The accelerated reader program is used in kindergarten through eighth grades as well as a fifteen minute “Drop everything and read” program through the twelfth grade. The high school students are also allowed to skip one semester test if they complete the requirements of a reading contract which entails reading 25 books of at least 100 pages. Another reading program has been established between the school and the local newspaper. The Timber Lake Topic publishes student written book reviews on a weekly basis. According to the principals, library circulation has doubled since these programs were initiated.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as maintenance for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

Based on the review of the school district files and interviews with staff, the monitoring team identified the area of referral for initial evaluations as meeting requirements. Referral information was documented in 100% of the files reviewed.

Needs Improvement

The monitoring team was unable to validate this area. It was moved to meets requirements.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Comprehensive plan

Child count data

District budget

Annual IDEA application for funds

Parent surveys

Age and placement data table I

Student file reviews

Promising Practices

The steering committee concluded the district has not suspended or expelled any child with a disability more than 10 cumulative school days.

Needs Improvement

The steering committee concluded the district needs to improve as one file reviewed did not provide data to determine a student's need for extended school year services.

Validation Results

Promising Practice

The monitoring team was unable to validate the identified promising practices. Those activities identified are mandated by rule and regulation.

Meets Requirements

Based on the review of the school district files and interviews with staff, the monitoring team identified the area of extended school year as meeting requirements. The need for extended school year was addressed in 100% of the files reviewed and the district has implemented a new tracking and determination form for extended school year services.

Needs Improvement

The monitoring team was unable to validate this area. It was moved to meets requirements.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Comprehensive plan

Student file reviews

Parent surveys

Interviews

Prior notice/consent form

District procedure

Student file reviews

Teacher surveys

MDT/eligibility report form

Table A general district information

Eligibility technical assistance guide

In-service training agenda

Cooperative forms

Monitoring report

CSPD needs assessment

Out of Compliance

The steering committee concluded the district was out of compliance in the area of evaluation based on the following findings: prior consent was not received for assessments administered in 5 of 14 files reviewed. Three of four files of individuals turning 16 did not include transition evaluations. Other

findings of concern included: 3 of 14 individuals were not evaluated in all areas of suspected disability, 4 of 14 files did not include functional evaluation, 2 of 14 files did not contain parent input, and 3 of 10 files did not contain enough information to determine present levels of performance and education need.

The steering committee concluded the district was out of compliance based on 1 evaluation not being completed within 25 school days of received consent.

In 2 of 4 files reviewed, the MDT documented all required content. One report did not contain the scores necessary to determine the basis for the determination. One written summary did not contain any of the standardized testing scores needed to determine eligibility.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

Based on the review of files and interviews, the monitoring committee found the area of evaluation meets requirements. Functional evaluation, transition evaluation and parent input were found in 100% of the files reviewed.

Based on a review of present forms, the monitoring committee determined the district has implemented a new MDT form which contains all the required content. This form was present and contained the necessary information in 100% of the files reviewed.

Needs Improvement

Based on file reviews the monitoring committee determined the district needs improvement in the area of time lines for evaluation/re-evaluation. During the reviews, one file exceeded the 30 calendar days for eligibility meeting and one file exceeded the 60 day timeline for initial evaluation.

Out of Compliance:

The monitoring committee was not able to validate the steering committee's findings in this area.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Comprehensive plan

Parent rights brochure

Prior notice form

Surrogate parent technical assistance guide

Data table L, complaints and hearings

Meets Requirements

The steering committee determined the district meet requirements based on parental rights information is given to parents with every prior notice/consent sent and at every IEP team meeting, ensures the parents have been fully informed in their native language or another mode of communication (if necessary) of all

information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought. Foster parents would typically be assigned as the surrogate parent if parental rights have been terminated and policies and procedures are in place within the comprehensive plan to address complaints and due process.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring committee validated the steering committee's findings in this area.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Comprehensive plan

Teacher surveys

Parent surveys

Student file reviews

Early Intervention (Part C) Exit Information

Hearings

Monitoring

Comprehensive plan

Prior notice form

Parent right brochure

IEP form

Child count

Promising Practices

20 of 20 general education staff felt they modified their curriculum to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Through Northwest Area Schools vocational units are made available on a rotating basis. This allows students to access a variety of life skills.

Meets Requirements

The district/agency ensures the IEP team is comprised of appropriate team membership and meets all identified responsibilities.

Needs Improvement

The steering committee determined the district needs improvement based on 3 parent surveys identified high goals were not set for their child and 2 felt services were not started immediately following the IEP meeting.

Out of Compliance

The steering committee determined the district was out of compliance due to 0 out of 11 files containing documentation of representatives from other agencies being invited to participate in the IEP meetings for

students of transition age. Agency representatives are not typically included on the meeting invitation notice. IEP's did not contain present levels of performance linked to functional evaluation, skill based measurable/observable annual goals and written justification describing why instruction for the student could not be conducted in the regular classroom setting.

The steering committee determined the district was out of compliance based on transition evaluations not being administered in 2 of 3 files reviewed, student centered life planning was not documented in 1 file and in 5 files the student's IEP's were not reviewed annually, on or before the date of the previous IEP.

Validation Results

Promising practice

The monitoring team was unable to validate the identified promising practices. Those activities identified are mandated by rule and regulation.

The monitoring team validated the promising practice of the cooperative sponsored vocational units. These units rotate so each school district has one unit a semester and involve such vocations as

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team validated the areas the steering committee identified as meeting requirements.

Based on file reviews, the district meets requirements in participation of other agencies, setting goals and initiating services. 100% of the files reviewed of students age 16 or older included other agencies. According to interviews with the staff and goals within IEP's, services were started immediately following the IEP meeting and the goals addressed met the student's needs.

Based on file reviews, 100% of the files contained present levels of performance linked to evaluation, skill based measurable/observable annual goals, appropriate written justification for placement and transition evaluations were conducted for students age 16 or older.

Needs Improvement

The monitoring team was unable to validate this area. It was moved to meets requirements.

Out of Compliance

The monitoring team was unable to validate the steering committee's findings in this area. The concerns were moved to meets requirements.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

Comprehensive plan
Parent surveys
Teacher surveys
Student file reviews
Data table F placement alternatives
Child count data

Promising Practices

The percentage of students receiving services in the regular classroom with modifications has gone from 69.05% to 73.33% to 71.11% over the past 3 years. The state average for the year 2003 was 54.97%.

100% of educators surveyed indicated they have opportunity to provide input into the development of the student's IEP.

Validation Results

Promising Practices

The monitoring team was unable to validate the identified promising practices. Those activities identified are mandated by rule and regulation.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team determined the district meets requirements in the area of least restrictive environment.